

The Leesburg Tree Commission met in regular session on Monday July 19, 1999 at 7:30 p.m. in the lower level meeting room, 25 West Market Street, Leesburg, VA. Members present were: Ms. Pritchard, Mr. Groothuis, Mr. Jay Frye, Mr. Hicks and Ms. Wall. Staff was represented by Mr. Jay S. Banks and Susan DeJong.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the June 21, 1999 meeting were approved as written.

ORIENTATION OF NEW COMMISSIONERS

Mr. Jay Frye was introduced as one of the new Commissioners and asked to tell the Commission something about himself. Mr. Frye said that he was interested in becoming a member of the Tree Commission because he was concerned as to what was happening with the Town of Leesburg. The Company he is with now, the former owner was very involved with the local politics and he encouraged Mr. Frye to join the Commission. Mr. Frye's background is in Agronomy, Horticulture and Soil Science. He is currently employed by Blake Landscaping.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Banks has signed the contract for the licensing of the ACRT software and has placed the purchase order. The total cost was \$6,900.00 which was budgeted for. The time frame for delivery will be some time during the month of September.

Mr. Groothuis asked that the Commissioners look at the Strategic Plan to see what parts of this plan the Commissioners would like to start implementing, prioritizing the items started and what the Commissioners would like to move forward on. Mr. Banks stated that he would like to remind the Commission that the Strategic Plan is a working document so that additions or subtractions may be made when deemed necessary. Some of the items that have been reviewed and/or underway are:

- Encourage the use of landscape easements.
- Promote the 2000 by 2000 Forestry Program.
- Research and implement an information line for citizen's questions.
- Involve Home Owner Associations in the Tree Commission meetings.
- Create a web site for the Town Arborist. - (Accomplished - www.leesburgva.org)
- Review and update the plant list.
- Inventory public trees and update annually.

Ms. Pritchard asked about having "pruning tips" on the Web site. Mr. Banks then discussed what information would be available on the Town's Web site and that he got the first electronic 2000 by 2000 tree registration and it worked just fine. This Web site is monitored internally to see how interested people are per which page. Ms. Farmer, of the public information office is in charge of monitoring this site.

Mr. Hicks brought up the bulleted item "Encourage the use of landscape easements," under the Strategic Plan Objectives asking if this was being handled by outside sources.

Mr. Groothuis said that this item would be handled when the Town of Leesburg hires a full time attorney. Also #3 "To review the Town's tree related ordinances annually" under objectives is being handled by an outside consultant.

Mr. Groothuis brought up another item on the Strategic Plan, "Review the Town Development practices" stating that he thought that this item should be implemented by having all the Commissions share the minutes of their meetings each month. Mr. Hicks thought that if Mr. Groothuis could get the Planning Commission to forward their minutes to him, that it would be a big help. Ms. Pritchard stated that Mr. Schonberger of the Planning Commission started out as a member of the Tree Commission and has always had a strong feeling for helping preserve trees. Mr. Hicks asked if we could get Mr. Schonberger to send us a copy of the Planning Commission minutes after each meeting.

Ms. Pritchard went on to ask if there was something else besides a fine that could be imposed on the Builder/Developers when they cut down trees designated as "saved trees"? Mr. Banks said that there was no monetary fine involved and that the only thing the Builder/Developers are required to do if they cut down a designated tree is to replace it with a 4-5 inch caliper tree. Ms. Pritchard wondered if some negative publicity would cause the Builder/Developers to think twice about cutting down trees. Mr. Frye said that in his experience with Builder/Developers that they seem more to be concerned with any bond moneys they have to post. He went on to say that sometimes involvement of the Community Association will deter the Builder/Developers from cutting down trees. Also, if you look at their landscape practices and when it comes time for them to move on to a new section, see what has been installed as far as decent quality landscaping.

Mr. Hicks asked about the objective "Research and Implement an information line for citizen's questions". Mr. Banks said that he has received phone calls dealing with questions and comments about trees in public areas and of course the Web site has been developed as well.

Ms. Pritchard brought up the next item "Involve Home Owners Association in the Tree Commission meetings." Mr. Banks handed out a list of addresses and phone numbers of Homeowners Associations in the area. Ms. Pritchard said that the reason for the list was to contact them for Educational purposes and to let them know that there is a Tree Commission and they are welcome to attend the meetings. Ms. Wall said that she would make up a letter to do this and bring it to the next Tree Commission meeting for approval.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Banks stated that when the Tree Commission updated the Zoning Ordinance in 1997 there was a component in there that he would like to address. The members were asked to look at a memo given to Mr. Boucher, Zoning Administrator. For the approved landscape plan of a recently completed subdivision to be accomplished, street trees needed to be planted in Homeowners' yards. A number of these yards had already been established and the Homeowners did not want trees planted. Mr. Banks and Assistant Zoning Administrator, Kevin P. Lawlor, inspected the residential development section and came up with a punch list of 41 trees that were missing or needed replacing. The Landscape company submitted a list of the trees and they responded as follows: "During the initial tree installation a letter was written each

Homeowner informing them of their individual tree installation. Flags were installed marking the locations. Many of the Homeowners rejected the trees due to small yards. The missing trees and the corresponding lot numbers represented those that did not want trees.” Those that did not want trees totaled 23. This is a 56 percent loss of tree cover from an approved plan. In a meeting with the Director of Planning and Zoning, the question was asked, what does the Ordinance say? The Ordinance states that “no occupancy permits shall be signed until trees, plants and other screening materials required by this article have been installed to the satisfaction of the Zoning Administrator.” However, it has been pointed out that this may contradict the DCSM which states that “all field work shall be done in accordance with the standards outlined in chapter 3 of the Virginia Erosion and Sediment Control Handbook.” This may need to be addressed as the revisions of the Ordinance are now taking place. Ms. Pritchard asked where this information could be found?

Zoning Ordinance = Article 9, Section 9A-24

DCSM = Section 8-600

Virginia Sediment and Erosion Control Handbook = Section 3.37 - transplanting trees - (page 375)

Ms. Pritchard nominated Ms. Wall as the vice chair was seconded by Mr. Frye and approved by all present.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Mr. Frye asked what the focus of the Tree Commission is. Ms. Pritchard answered that the Vision Statement and the Mission Statement on the cover of the Strategic Plan should be helpful to Mr. Frye.

There being no further business the Tree Commission adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Jay S. Banks, Town Arborist

Susan C. DeJong, Recording Secretary